

GCIT team tops Glassboro in 14th Annual Consumer Bowl

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WEST DEPTFORD TWP. Gloucester County Institute of Technology (GCIT) edged out a victory over Glassboro High School (GHS) at the Gloucester County Office of Consumer Protection and the State Office of Consumer Affairs 14th Annual Consumer Bowl on Tuesday.

The Consumer Bowl highlights students' knowledge of consumer protections, rights and laws.

Five Gloucester County high schools participated in this year's event held at RiverWinds. Glassboro High School beat Woodbury and West Deptford high schools in the first round to face GCIT, who beat Gateway, in the finals.

"It's a real eye-opener," said GCIT Consumer Bowl team member and senior Harley Monk.

Joe Ewald, another GCIT team member, agreed.

"It's a good way to learn how to protect ourselves now," Ewald said.

The team said that studying and participating for the bowl taught them consumer tips they would have never known. They were led by Walt Chandler, advisor for GCIT's Academy of Finance and Business Management. The rest of their team included Clinton Bullock and Tom Petri. Steve Laszczyk, original captain of the team, couldn't make the Consumer Bowl since his ACL surgery was moved to that morning because of this week's snow storm.

Questions on lemon laws, credit card scams and consumer protection were asked by Faith Clement, investigator with the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs.

GHS' team, which came in second place, said long hours of studying prepared them for this year's Consumer Bowl. The students involved - seniors Steven Whitten, Ryan Gilbert, J.T. Margrabia and Tan Marie Sabb, and junior Sharif Thomas - are a part of DECA, an after-school club that focuses on business and marketing. Their advisor is Barbara Jones.

"This helps us get prepared for the real world," said Whitten, captain of the team. "It teaches us to be safe consumers."

All participants received T-shirts and certificates of achievement. GCIT was awarded individual trophies and gift cards to each member, presented by Gloucester County Freeholder Jean DuBois.

Clement, moderator for the day, said it's extremely important for high school-aged students to learn about consumer affairs.

"They have a lot of buying power," Clement said. "They could be easy targets, but they aren't."

GCIT will now move to the southern regionals which will be held in April at Burlington County College's Pemberton campus. The winner of that will face two other teams in the state finals.